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Seventieth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND PART (PUBLIC)* OF THE 1890th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 31 October 2000 at 12.35 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. MEDINA QUIROGA

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* The summary record of the first part (closed) of the meeting appears as document CCPR/C/SR.1890.

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GE.00-45455 (E)

The public part of the meeting was called to order at 12.35 p.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 2) (continued)

1. The CHAIRPERSON said that, for the purpose of the concluding observations on the reports considered at the current session, the Committee needed to decide the dates for the submission of the next periodic reports of the States concerned. After discussion in the Bureau, it had been decided to propose the year 2005 for Argentina and Denmark and 2003 for Gabon and Peru. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, the date suggested was either 2003 or 2004.

2. Ms. CHANET said that she was in favour of all the dates suggested by the Bureau. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago she would be in favour of 2003.

3. The CHAIRPERSON said that, in the absence of any further comment, she took it that the Committee wished to request Gabon, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago to submit periodic reports in 2003, and Argentina and Denmark in 2005.

4. It was so decided.

5. The CHAIRPERSON announced that the Bureau had held a further discussion of the proposal to publish a collection of works (a "Festschrift") by present and former members of the Committee in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Covenant and the Optional Protocol and the first session of the Human Rights Committee. The first question discussed was that of language. The initial assumption was that contributions would be in the Committee's working languages - English, French or Spanish, each article being accompanied by a short summary in the other two languages. Mr. Amor, however, had suggested that contributions should be accepted in the six official languages of the United Nations, including Arabic, Chinese and Russian. Some doubt had been expressed as to the possibility of attaching five summaries in five different languages to each article, and whether any publisher could be found willing to undertake such a project.

6. The next point taken up was how the process of preparing the book itself should be organized. It was proposed that a small editorial group consisting of five members should be appointed, followed by the establishment of a larger advisory committee to which articles could be referred for comment. The small group should have three members with English, French and Spanish as their mother tongues. It was also felt to be important that one of them at least should be able to read two of the three languages. It was further suggested that Mr. Pocar, who could read all three languages and had enormous experience in writing, editing and publishing, should be asked to join the group. The other names proposed were Ms. Evatt for English, Ms. Chanet for French and herself for Spanish. It was also suggested that, if possible, a fifth person should be appointed from outside, after consultation with the publisher. The membership of the larger advisory committee had not yet been discussed.

7. The third point to be taken up was the question of a publisher and various firms had been suggested. All the members of the Bureau were aware that it would be vital to have a clear idea of the length of the proposed book and the number of contributors, before approaching a publisher. Clearly, therefore, the publisher would have to be chosen at a later stage.

8. Fourthly, a letter had been sent to all present and former members of the Committee inviting contributions. Not many replies had been received so far, and so the Bureau had decided that another letter should be sent, giving a closing date by which participants would need to decide whether or not they wished to contribute. She had been asked to urge the present members to state whether they wished to contribute, and to announce the probable topic of their contribution, before the end of the current session.

9. Mr. AMOR, referring to the language question, considered that the Committee had no power to refuse a contribution in any of the six official languages. Moreover, the more languages that were used, the greater would be the readership of the publication. It would have a chance of being read in places where little was as yet known about the work of the Committee or, indeed any of the machinery in place in the United Nations for the defence of human rights. He was much in favour, therefore, of inviting contributions in any of the official languages, but he would of course be ruled by the Committee.

10. The advisory committee proposed would need to be as practical and objective as possible. He suggested that it should consist of the present and former chairpersons of the Committee, all of whom had helped to develop it and were in a position to make a useful contribution. It should also have full freedom to consult any suitable person from outside. It was somewhat premature to discuss the question of a publisher since so much would depend on the contributions. When the length of the articles and the languages actually used were known, the advisory committee should be free to act. He noted that persons proposing to contribute should be asked to indicate the subject and, if possible, the exact title of their articles. There might be a certain amount of duplication, to which exception might be taken.

11. Ms. GAITAN DE POMBO said that she was very much in favour of the project to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary with a "Festschrift". She also agreed with Mr. Amor on the question of languages. She was sure that it would be possible to find editors and a publisher able to work in the six languages. She also supported the idea of a committee of present and former chairpersons as a means of making use of the Committee's institutional memory. She herself was ready to contribute an article on the experience of being a member of the Committee, one of the topics suggested in the letter from the Chairperson. Another matter that would need to be decided was the appropriate length of an article, the date by which it must be received and how questions of duplication were to be resolved. She hoped that the project would receive the necessary support and that the resulting collection would be widely disseminated.

12. Ms. CHANET endorsed the views of the former speakers concerning the languages to be used. The financial implications of the project would need to be borne in mind and should be worked out as soon as possible. She was also in favour of a committee of former and present chairpersons, with its first meeting to be held in New York in March 2001. It would be important to prepare the list of topics as soon as possible with a view to approaching a publisher. The Chairperson of the Committee in March should be asked to report on all that had been done in the meantime.

13. Mr. SOLARI YRIGOYEN said that he had first learnt of the project from the Chairperson's letter and the idea had at once appealed to him. He would like more information on some of the practical aspects, however: for example, the length of the book, and the question

of translating it into all official languages. What were the topics which had been suggested? Some balance would need to be kept among the contributions or there might be too many on one aspect of the Covenant and none at all on another. In principle, he would be glad to contribute.

14. The CHAIRPERSON observed that Mr. Amor had not suggested translating the contributions but rather that contributions could be written in any of the six official languages. It would be too late to leave the question of the number of articles until March 2001. A letter needed to go out at once setting a final date for notification of willingness to contribute. The discussion would be continued at the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.